

CHRONICLE AND COMMENT OF THE STAGE

Shaw Does Poor Job Despite a Good Chance

By Heywood Brown

It is hard to understand why Shaw has not done better in "Augustus Does His Bit." A play making fun of the army would seem to be in the very center of his alley. Our impression was that the play failed because of a quality rare in Shaw. It is not fair. As a rule Shaw never touches a character without making out the best possible case for him. He will override all realities to do this and equip a dustman with a complete outfit of Shavian logic to confound all who look down on him. Since Shaw is able to argue on any side he has a habit of leaping from one person to another. He will lead his audience to think that some individual in the play has an impregnable position, only to desert him and smash down the defenses in favor of some one of his other creations. Perhaps the finest example occurs in "Mrs. Warren's Profession," when the play has progressed to a point where it seems as if nothing can possibly be said for the woman. Then, suddenly, she turns and, instead of defending herself against her daughter, strikes out with great fury and skill and remains, at least, the master of an act.

Shaw has done one blood cousin to Augustus in Britannicus of "Caesar and Cleopatra"; but even Britannicus, although almost pure caricature, is allowed a rather engaging scene, in which he shows his courage and loyalty to Caesar. But Shaw will say nothing in defense of that class of officers which he typifies in Augustus. Personally, we doubt very much if there is such a class. The type which Shaw describes is not only underhanded, but a shirker, as well. This is not usually the case in armies. Wherever you find a underhanded officer you almost invariably find a prodigious worker. In nine cases out of ten he is enormously sincere and passionate in his devotion to duty. That, after all, is the tragedy of underhandedness. The greater the effort the worse is the muddle. It is a bit unfair to assail a man on the twin grounds of being incompetent and a shirker as well. If a man is thoroughly incompetent, the less work he does the better.

Shaw's taste has been assailed, because in "Augustus Does His Bit" he uses some of the heroic formulae for comic effect. Thus, the strutting officer is always telling people that they must do this or mustn't do that, because "our brave boys at the front are dying in the trenches." It seems to us that it is eminently fair that Shaw should do this. After all, the sentimental war playwrights have had their turn with all the formulae, and it seems no more than just that a satirist should have a chance. No formula is worthy keeping as a permanent slogan until it has first been subjected to the search of satire. In this way can the true be distinguished from the false. In gently ridiculing some of the catchwords by which nations lived during the war, Shaw is engaged in an essential occupation. Catchwords may be true when first uttered and remain true until said seventy times seven and then begin to disintegrate. They rub like coins and finally people toss them about with no thought of the meaning or the significance of the inscription which they bear. "To make the world safe for democracy" was a fine phrase and, with certain domestic limitations, a true one, but to many people today that it means as much as it did? The fault is not in the phrase, but in the fearfully stress and strain to which it has been put. In ridiculing certain phrases Shaw is doing no more than to examine them as to their present worth and fitness.

It isn't his general intention which falls short so much as his method. There is precious little bite to the lines of the new one-act trifle, and a good many plays to the easy laugh. We think that some of our lesser playwrights might be encouraged to observe that Shaw himself is not above the joke about the bullet which strikes a man's head and is badly dented. Not having seen the play in type we do not know whether it was Shaw or the actor who thought up the comic possibilities of tripping over a sword or trying to sit down on top of it.

It is to be hoped that Shaw will do another play along the lines of "Augustus Does His Bit," but do it a great deal better. Certainly, there should be a very legitimate field for army satire after the war. There are a few per-

sons in this country who are disposed to look at anything pertaining to the army as sacred. That is a dangerous point of view, and the sooner a Shaw or anybody else can knock it out of us all, the better.

A reader who signs himself G. T. K. thinks that we have been signally unfair to Dunsany's "The Tents of the Arabs." That is entirely possible, although we remember very acutely that we had no enjoyment from it. Of course, we do not cite this fact as any certain proof that the work in question is not among the most lofty. G. T. K. is chiefly nettled because we spoke slightly of the English in this particular Dunsany play. He challenges us to name any play in New York, with the exception of Hamlet, which has more literary flavor. Of course the answer to that is to cite "Dear Brutus," which seems to us to have an immeasurably more charming style. It may be true that "The Tents of the Arabs" is infinitely better written than a number of popular plays which our reader names, but, after all, even if this were so, we would still contend that it was not good writing for the stage.

But we are not inclined to admit its worth even without this qualification. G. T. K. cites us several lines which he thinks bear out his contention as to the literary worth of Dunsany's style in this particular play. One of these is a speech by Ezarza, who says, "I will raise up my head of a nighttime against the sky, and the old, old unbought stars shall twinkle through my hair, and we shall not envy any of the dimmed queens of the world."

It is somewhat unfair to snatch a few lines out of their context, but admitting this, our dislike for the particular literary flavor of "The Tents of the Arabs" arises from just such passages. This passage seems to us pretentious, self-conscious English. It has no savor. There are too many adjectives and it represents no sincerity of expression. It is not easy and it is not exciting. We don't like it.

New Plays To Be

Presented by Shuberts
Before Season Closes

Before the season closes Messrs. J. J. and Lee Shubert plan to present a number of new plays. Rachel Crothers' latest comedy, "33 East," with Henry Hull, Constance Binney, Lucia Moore, Blanche Frederici, Alison Skipworth, Mildred Arden, Edith Gresham, Victor Sutherland, Albert Carroll and others, will open in New York within three weeks.

"Oh, Uncle!" a musical comedy in two acts by Edgar Smith, music by Jacques Presburg and Charles Jules, will be staged in Trenton next week. The cast includes Helen Shipman, Connie Ediss, Nancy Fair, Renee Adore, Sam Ash, Harry Corson Clarke, Bert Hanlon, Charles Olcott, Lew Cooper, Joe Kane and others.

The dramatization by George V. Hobart of David Graham Phillips' novel, "The Rise and Fall of Susan Lenox," which will be known as "Susan Lenox, a Pilgrimage," is being rehearsed by Oscar Eagle, to open shortly out of town. Some of the players already engaged for this important production are Averill Harris, William Holden, Ethel Brandon and Madeline Marshall.

Pending available theatres here they have in readiness and on tour "Hello, Alexander!" with McIntyre and Health; "Yesterday," a new musical romance by Reginald De Koven and Glen MacDonough, which opened Monday in Wilmington; "The Dancer," by Edward Locke, and "Scandal," with Charles Cherry and Francine Larimore, now current in Chicago.

"The Kiss Burglar"

At the Broadhurst
"The Kiss Burglar" has returned to the Broadhurst Theatre for an indefinite run, beginning to-morrow evening. The cast is headed by Miss Marie Carroll, Denman Maye and Harry Clarke. Others in the large company are Louise Mink, Ann Sanders, George Leon Moore, Emmett Shackelford, Louis Brown, Robert Norman, and under the auspices of the Stage Women's War Relief. The entire orchestra will be reserved for wounded men until 7 o'clock.



JEREMIAH HOWARTH AND PAUL THEVENAZ IN "DANCE RECITAL"



OTIS SKINNER IN "THE HONOR OF THE FAMILY"

BLANCHE BATES AND HOLBROOK BLINN IN "MOLIERE"



MSKAY MORRIS IN "THE TENT OF THE ARABS"



E. LYALL JEWETT IN "A BURGOMASTER OF BELGIUM"



"MARIE CARROLL" IN "THE KISS BURGLAR"

The Movie as a School of Acting

When I returned to the stage in "Forever After," after two years spent in acting before the camera, most of the critics expressed a mild surprise that I had not brought back with me the flamboyant acting methods of the movies. Now, the flamboyant acting methods of the movies is a myth which persists and will not be downed so long as the memory of those crudest early films remains. Before actors and directors were acquainted with the materials with which they had to work they thought excessive expression was necessary to put an emotion across in pictures. The present day familiarity with the mechanics of picture-taking has revolutionized this theory. Every one who studies the art of picture-making now knows that before the powerful magnifying eye of the camera exaggerations become actual distortions which no one may cultivate with profit.

The thing against which to be eternally watchful in acting for the pictures is overacting. A greater premium is placed on restraint here than on the stage. Restraint is imposed upon one first of all by the physical limitations of the screen. Instead of having the width and depth of the average stage in which to work one must obtain the desired results within comparatively close camera lines. This concentration within a limited space makes for what might be called "the small method" in acting, which is really the development of finesse.

For example, in my stage work before I acted in the pictures, I had the common habit of swinging my arms about freely. I had never thought very much about the comparative advantages of a full-arm motion as against a motion of the hands and forearm, by which to get the same effects—and if I had thought about it I

should probably have decided upon the full-arm motion as being the more striking. But the screen does not allow much room for this sort of swinging about, and when I saw these gestures reproduced in the pictures I saw how ineffectual many of them were. There was imposed upon me the necessity for learning the use of the smaller motions—and by it I learned the amazing range of expression to be obtained from the use of the hand. I learned to keep my wide gestures for moments of supreme importance.

The subtlety that lies in economy of motion is something one cannot fail to learn from picture-acting. Nothing would be more grotesque and incomprehensible in pictures than the indiscriminate moving about so common on the stage. Gesture means so much that it is precious. One must limit one's self only to those movements essential to the action of the piece or the development of the character—and thus is learned the lesson of repose.

It is, of course, true that picture dramas are acted with almost no re-

hearsal, so that the excesses of an inexperienced characterization are not easily avoided. But one is continually disciplined by being faced unrelentingly with the effect of each least motion of face and body. The effect of the mere flicker of an eyelash is brought back to the actress—so that she learns the value of shadings of expressions with a conviction she may never acquire on the stage.

The stage and screen make different demands on one. A screen characterization is made up of short, concentrated moments, in which an actress calls all her forces under control for a few minutes. She is not called upon to sustain her pitch for any length of time. The stage gives her the magic assistance of a voice, by which she may relax her vigilance on her mimetic faculties—but it demands of her that she sustain a mood truly for a much longer period. Some day, when directors have overcome their passion for "chopping up" a picture drama into short scenes, this same capacity for sustained strength will be demanded of the film actress.

One returns to the stage from the

movies with a treasure of experience that is surprisingly sound currency. There are perhaps a few tricks that have to be discarded—one need not be so accurately aware, for instance, of one's "line" or one's profile on the stage—but one returns with a sharpened sense of the artistic value of sincerity and simplicity.

Notwithstanding the impression that moving picture acting is all a matter of tricks and poses, you cannot make a character, robbed of the magnetic assistance of the voice, seem anything but a puppet unless you vitalize it with feeling and intelligence.

The Golden Fleece For the Actors' Fund

"The Golden Fleece," a romantic drama based on the Medea myth written by Thomas Broadhurst, will be

given its first performance on any stage at the Broadhurst Theatre on Sunday night, March 23, by an all-star cast. The Actor's Fund is to be the beneficiary of the performance, and prominent stars have volunteered their services either to appear in the production or to assist in making it the biggest event given in recent years under the auspices of the fund.

Miss Blanche Bates has been cast for the rôle of Medea, and the names of the other players, most of whom are of equal prominence, will be announced within a few days.

This is the first time that the Medea story, said to be one of the oldest in the world, has been treated by an Eng-

lish-speaking playwright. The cast will number over fifty persons.

Burlesque Company Headed by Geo. P. Murphy at Columbia
The Burlesque Wonder Show is the title of the organization that will furnish the entertainment at the Columbia Theatre to-morrow afternoon. A new musical piece in two acts, called "My Wife Won't Let Me," will be given.

Dance Recital at Greenwich Village Theatre
At the Greenwich Village Theatre to-night, Michio Itow, Tulle Lindahl, Jessmin Howarth and Paul Thevenaz will give a dance recital.

AMUSEMENTS NEW YORK'S LEADING THEATRES AND SUCCESSES

EMPIRE 14th St. & 4th St. Eves. 8:20. Mat. 2:30. **"BARRIE AT HIS BEST"** CHARLES FROHMAN presents **WILLIAM GILLETTE** "IMBARDIE'S BEST COMEDY" **DEAR BRUTUS** MATINEES WEDNESDAY & SAT.

GLOBE Bway & 46 St. Eves at 8:20. **TOMORROW (MON) 8:20** CHARLES FROHMAN presents **OTIS SKINNER** IN THE 3 ACT PLAY **"THE HONOR OF THE FAMILY"** MATS. WED. & SAT. 2:30. PRICES: Eves. (except Sat. & Holidays) & Mat. \$2 to \$10. Sat. Night & Holidays \$2.50 to \$10.

LIBERTY Theatre, West 44 St. Klaw & Erlanger. Mgrs. Tel. Bryant, 27. **To-morrow Eve. Promptly at 8:30** MATINEES WEDNESDAY & SATURDAY, AT 2:30 **HENRY MILLER HOLBROOK BLINN BLANCHE BATES ESTELLE WINWOOD** AND A DISTINGUISHED COMPANY IN **MOLIERE** A PLAY BY PHILIP MOULIER

Lyceum 14th St., nr. Broadway. Eves. 8:20. Mat. 2:30. **227 TO 234 TIMES** DAVID BELASCO presents **DADDIES**

Belasco W. 44th St. Eves. 8:20. **149 TO 156 TIMES** DAVID BELASCO presents **FRANCES STARR** "TIGER! TIGER!"

NEW AMSTERDAM Theatre, W. 42nd St. "The House Beautiful" Klaw & Erlanger Mgrs. Eves 8:15. Mats Wed & Sat 2:15 **A LEAGUE OF LAUGHTER ATTUNED TO VICTOR HERBERT'S LIVELIEST LILTS** Klaw & Erlanger's **THE VELVET LADY** Music by Victor Herbert Book by Fred Jackson Adapted by Henry Blossom **CAST OF EXCELLENCE** and **PRETTIEST, DAINTIEST, DANCING GIRL CHORUS**

KNICKERBOCKER Eves 8:20. Mat. 2:30. **KLAW & ERLANGER** presents **JOHN CORT'S NEWEST, BIGGEST AND BEST MUSICAL COMEDY** **LISTEN LESTER** By Harry L. Corl & George E. Stoddard Music by Harold Orbis with The Daintiest Dancing Chorus Ever Seen on Broadway. EXTRA MAT. TUES. & MON. 25.

EXTRA MATINEE EVERY FRIDAY **GAITEY THEATRE** Bway & 46 St. Eves 8:30. Mat. 2:30. **2 SMITH & GOLDEN HITS** **3 WISE FOOLS** CRITERION Bway & 44th St. Eves 8:30. Mats. Wed. and Sat. 2:30.

ZATOP NEW AMSTERDAM THEATRE—TWO ENTIRELY DIFFERENT SHOWS **ZIEGFELD 9 O'CLOCK REVUE** & **MIDNIGHT FROLIC** NEXT **ONLY (FAREWELL) ROCK & WHITE** PREVIOUS TO SAILING AND **ONLY WEEK OF ROCK & WHITE** FOR LONDON

HARRIS West 124 St. Eves at 8:20. Mat. 2:30. **12th BIG WEEK!** The Play of a Thousand Thrills Grips New York! NOT A WAR PLAY **THE INVINCIBLE Foe** "Thrills that bite to the marrow." —Dorothy Dix

"Uli's" "Uli's" **The Better Ole** with **MR. & MRS. COBURN** CORT THEATRE, West 45 St. Eves 8:30. Mat. 2:30. **LAST 9 TIMES**

COHAN & HARRIS' 4 BIG HITS **COHAN & HARRIS THEATRE** West 42 St. Eves 8:15. Mat. 2:15. **BIGGEST SUCCESS SINCE "THE MERRY WIDOW"** **THE ROYAL VAGABOND** A COHANIZED OPERA COMIQUE Music by Stephen Sondheim Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim **GEO. COHAN THEATRE** M. Bway & 43 St. Eves 8:30. Mat. 2:30. **"A PRINCE THERE WAS"** Mr. Cohan (Himself) as the New Yorker THE LAUGHING HIT OF THE TOWN

HUDSON West 44 St. Eves 8:30. Mat. 2:30. **LOUIS MANN & SAM BERNARD** IN **"FRIENDLY ENEMIES"** THE NATION'S COMEDY

STUART WALKER presents **The Book of Job** AND LORD DUNSANY'S **THE TENTS OF THE ARABS** **PUNCH & JUDY** 45th St. Eves 8:30. Mat. 2:30. **YALE PROM SHOW** Plays by LORD DUNSANY, GEORGE ABE, Etc. By The Yale Dramatic Association. Starts Thursday. Mail Orders Now.

MRS. FISKE in a comedy of moonshine madness and make believe **Mis' Nellie of NoMeans** By LAURENCE EYRE Under the Direction of Harrison Gray Fiske **THREE FACES EAST** BY ANTHONY PAUL KELLY WITH EMMETT CORRIGAN & VIOLET HENING

BROOKLYN AMUSEMENTS **MAJESTIC** Matinees Wed. & Sat. Week Commencing To-morrow Night Messrs. LEE & J. SHUBERT Present **"The Smartest Musical Comedy of the Season"** **LITTLE SIMPLICITY** with **WALTER CATLETT MARJORIE GATESON** Mabel Withee, Stewart Baird, Carl Gantvoort and the Cameron Sisters. To-day at 2:15 & 8:15 **KEITH CONCERTS** Nine Big Acts Next Week **KALICH** in "The Riddle Woman"

AT THE HIPPODROME **GREENWICH VILLAGE THEATRE** 4251 6th Ave. Phone Spring 6-09 **THERE ARE POOR PLAYS, THERE ARE GOOD PLAYS, AND PLAYS THAT ARE PREMIER IF YOU'RE AFTER THE BEST GO AND SEE** **HOBOMERIA** A SCINTILLATING SATIRE ON VILLAGE LIFE **GREENWICH VILLAGE THEATRE** DANCE RECITAL TO-NIGHT at 9 Michio Itow—Tulle Lindahl Jessmin Howarth—Paul Thevenaz

MONTAUK POPULAR PRICES To satisfy the overwhelming demand of those who were unable to procure seats for her former engagement **CHARLES EMERSON COOK** Will Present for the Second Time **FLORENCE NASH** IN **"REMNANT"** WITH ORRIN JOHNSON & N. Y. CAST **WEEK OF LEO DITRICHSTEIN** MARCH 16 in "The Marquis de Priola" Seats Now, Regular Prices.

COLUMBIA Bway and 47th St. **NEW SHOW EVERY WEEK TO-NIGHT** at 8:15, 10:15 & 11:15. COMMENCING TO-MORROW AFTERNOON **BURLESQUE WONDER SHOW** with Geo. P. Murphy and Primrose Remon **STARS DAILY—Moderate Prices—Bookings**

AMUSEMENTS **TO-DAY (SUNDAY) MATINEE at 2:15 At the HIPPODROME** Benefit, 164th Regt. Field Artillery, 27th Division Commanded by MAJOR GENERAL JOHN F. O'RYAN. Under Auspices of 1st U. S. A. N. Y. O. **MARIE DRESSLER'S MATINEE FOR THE BOYS of the 27th** **UNEQUALLED BILL & STAGE FAVORITES!** ED. WYNN, Master of Ceremonies **JULIA ARTHUR JOHNNY DOOLEY FREDERICK SANTLEY JOHN BERRIS FRANK FAY DOROTHY DICKSON and CARL HYNON ORVILLE HARKOLD** **DOIRALDA & BAND GRACE FIELDS KITTIE DONER 4 Entertainers from "LISTEN LESTER" ADELAIDE & HUGHES** **THE NEW YORK POLICE BAND** **GILBERT & SULLIVAN Condensed "H. M. S. Pinafore" with JEFFERSON DE ANGELO, RALPH BERT, WM. CARLTON, JR., BLANCHE DUFFIELD, JOHN PHILLIPS, VIRGINIA HIPPODROME ORCHESTRA** **FOX BROOKS, WM. O. STEWART and MARIE DRESSLER and the SONGS BY PROVISIONAL BATTERY FIRST FIELD ARTILLERY Arranged by MARIE DRESSLER. Special Music by A. BALDWIN SLOANE**